

Parent Handbook

Faith Christian School

Revised Edition - 2010

1) Introduction

Instructing covenant children is an awesome task. It is a very complex work which must be directed to a specific goal. The goal is stated in 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The goal is also stated in 2 Tim. 3:17. “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Truth of the Word of God is the foundation of all knowledge. As Creator of all things by the power of His word, God also, through the Scriptures, instructs His children in every area of His creation. “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:” Col. 1:16 To whom else should we turn to understand and teach the subjects of His creation? God has created, and God has revealed that creation.

This implies, negatively, that any area of study, and supposed fact, any representation of truth which man presents, which is contrary to the Truth of God’s Word, is vanity and sin. Education that is Christian must expose this. Positively, this implies that all facts remain undeveloped until seen in the light of God’s Word. This is not the work of man in his textbooks, but the work of parents at home and godly teachers in the classroom. Such teachers, in their love for the foundation of knowledge, will avail themselves of every opportunity to witness that truth in every subject. The Christian teacher will see all things spiritually. God will be taught in all subjects. This is a lofty goal, but one which deserves our best efforts.

As a guide in this task, parents and teachers should be well acquainted with the book by Rev. D. Engelsma, *Reformed Education*. Both parent and teacher would do well to read this book every year as the home and school together take up the teaching of covenant seed.

Teachers are called to help parents fulfill their calling to rear their children in accordance with the command of God in Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6:4 “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Teachers have been trained to give instruction across the academic curriculum, but must never forget that they are essentially servants of the children, parents, and God. We must love the children as the parents do, and carry out all instruction in love. The instruction at Faith Christian School may not be exclusively academic, but is mainly spiritual, ethical rearing, done in the way of teaching subjects and developing fully God-given abilities.

This handbook includes guidelines for behavior and rules for Faith Christian School. Enforcing these rules as well as the broader work we have as parents and teachers to structure the life of the child in godly living requires discipline. The common goal of the teachers and parents is the child’s willful submission to the authority of our covenant God, to the praise and glory of his name. Thus, home and school must make

prayerfully certain that their united application of the rod and reproof both reflect that divine authority and impress that authority and the obedience it demands forcefully upon the student. The student must be made to know that while his disobedience is harmful to himself and to his classmates, and evidences a sinful disrespect of both home and school, his disobedience is first, last, and ever an offence against God; a sin which, if unrepented of, will bear bitter fruit, both in this life and in the life to come.

When we understand that we are servants of God called to direct the attention of the child to God and his rule for life on this earth, we will guard against multiplying rules that only serve to make our lives as authorities more pleasant lest we provoke the children to wrath. The rules made for school are established for the orderly operation of the school, the safety of the children, and to instruct the children in godly living. We must deal patiently and firmly, knowing that we are all sinful and have only a beginning of new obedience. We are called to have an intolerance for sin desiring the salvation of the child in our chastisement and forgiveness.

It is imperative, then, in this always difficult, often frustrating, and sometimes seemingly fruitless matter of student discipline; that the home and school work together closely, in harmony, in mutual and peaceable submission one to another as unto the Lord, who has entrusted his covenant seed, his own inheritance, into our care and nurture. We must confess that we are as our children - fallen and prone to every evil – and our conduct toward our children and especially one to another is perhaps more instructive to our children than our discipline of them itself.

- a) **Goal: What we want for our students.** The fundamental goal is that the students be discerning and have wisdom to serve God for His glory. The students will learn to test all of their experiences in light of God's Word as summarized in the Confessions. Some of the other goals are as follows:
 - i) Knowledge – students will gain knowledge of God as He is revealed in His Word, in His creation, and culture.
 - ii) Love – Students will learn to express their love for God and their neighbor.
 - iii) Freedom – Students will learn to live freely within the covenant in the way of obedience to God and those given authority by God, rather than living in bondage to Satan and our sinful nature.
 - iv) Stewardship – Students will learn the proper way to use and enjoy God's creation and culture
 - v) Service – Students will learn to use their gifts for the benefit of others.

- b) **Our View of the Child**
 - i) not merely a brain
 - ii) a covenant child who is loved by his parents
 - iii) saved sinner
 - iv) an individual under authority (Eph. 6:1-3).
 - v) must learn to obey, i.e. willing submission, i.e. doing what they are told without challenge, without excuse, without delay (Tripp 138)

- c) **Our View of the Parent**
- i) one called to rear children of the covenant in love
 - ii) one who hands over his child asking the teacher to stand with them in the rearing of their child
- d) **Our View of the Teacher**
- i) not one who is determined to fix what are perceived to be mistakes of the parents
 - ii) stands in place of the parent
 - iii) servants of the children, parents, and God (Engelsma 65)
 - iv) must be full of the Spirit and grace of God
 - v) must be trustworthy, honest, and virtuous
 - vi) must have love for the Reformed truth and principles
 - vii) must know their stuff, be able to work with children, and get the material through to the child
 - viii) “must be awestruck with his calling ... Having this attitude, he will depend on God for the ability to do the work and will pray for grace constantly. He will also be diligent. He will give it all he has” (Engelsma 78).
- e) **Relationship of the home and school:** “The home and school must be one in mind, one in will, and above all, one in heart as to who the child is, what the required instruction and discipline are, and who God is” (Engelsma 78).
- f) **Authority**
- i) the right and demand to act on God’s behalf
 - ii) “You may not try to shape the lives of your children as pleases you, but as pleases Him” (Tripp 29).
 - iii) all instruction, care, nurture, rearing, correction, discipline is undertaken because God commands us, not because we want to accomplish our own personal goal
 - iv) “Children will be good decision makers as they observe faithful parents modeling and instructing wise direction and decision making on their behalf” (Tripp 33)
 - v) must be exercised wisely being sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child and our mistakes which arise out of our own sinful nature. Guidelines for a biblical appeal to a directive:
 - (1) begin to obey immediately, not after appeal (Tripp 141)
 - (2) be prepared to obey either way
 - (3) appeal in a respectful manner
 - (4) accept the result of the appeal with a gracious spirit

2) General Information

- a) **Class Time** (400 minutes – 90 = 310 per day) (A private school must have at least 875 hours of instruction each year)
 - i) School starts at 8:20 AM and dismisses at 3:00 PM.
 - ii) Morning Recess for K and Lower Room: 9:55 – 10:10 AM
 - iii) Morning Recess for Middle & Upper Room: 10:10 AM – 10:25
 - iv) Noon Recess 11:45 – 12:30 PM
 - v) Afternoon Recess 2:00 – 2:15
 - vi) Class begins when the tardy bell rings (5 minute)
- b) **Days of school:** School is in session 178 days per school year
- c) **Catechism** begins the week after Labor Day
 - i) Grades 1-3 report directly to church after the 8:20 bell and are expected back in class at 9:15 (catechism instruction from 8:25 – 9:10)
 - ii) Grades 4-5 leave at 9:05 and return at 10:00 (catechism instruction from 9:10 – 9:55)
 - iii) Grades 6-7 leave at 9:55 and return to class at 10:50 (catechism instruction from 10:00 – 10:45)
- d) **Semesters:** The school year is divided into two semesters with 4 nine-week marking periods in each
- e) **Classroom division:** Our students are divided into four rooms: K, 1st & 2nd, 3rd – 5th, 6th – 8th.
- f) **Registration** is usually scheduled for a Monday evening toward the beginning of August between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. at the school.
- g) **Milk** (white and chocolate) is available to all students. It is ordered at registration.
- h) **The Iowa Test of Basic Skills** is administered to the students in grades 3-8 during January and grades 1-2 in March of each school year.
- i) **School cleaning** is done by a janitor hired by the school board.
- j) **School Supplies:** The school will supply workbooks and textbooks. A list of other supplies needed (paper, pencils, erasers, etc.) will be provided before August and must be purchased by the parents.
- k) **Health and Safety:** First aid is administered at school for minor injuries. In case of an injury that requires treatment by medical professionals, the parents are notified of the status and requested to arrange for treatment. Parents should keep an up-to-date emergency number on file at the school. Teachers may give medicine to students upon written permission and instructions from the parents. For example, if a student needs to take antibiotics for a time this would be acceptable. These instructions should be noted in the child's records or the enrollment form. Teachers will not hand out medication such as ibuprofen because a student isn't feeling well.
- l) **Hearing and Eye Testing:** All students will have their eyesight and hearing tested once a year, usually early in the school year. Any eyesight or hearing problems will be reported to the parents.
- m) **Hot Lunch** is planned by the Ladies Circle and served every other Wednesday. Teachers keep track of which students take lunch. These records are collected quarterly by a member of the Ladies Circle and bills sent home with the children.

- n) **Donut days** are every other Wednesday. Teachers keep track of which students take donuts. Mothers take turns bringing them according to calendar.
- o) **Chapel Exercises** are held in church at least 4 times a year – each teacher taking a turn. Teachers may invite ministers and seminary students to speak if they choose not to speak themselves. Students are asked to dress respectfully.
- p) **School closings** and delays are determined by the public school and are announced on local radio and TV stations. We open at 9:00 with a 1 hour delay, and 10:00 with a two hour delay. Parents will be called when school closes early to have their children picked up. If the public school is not in session, the administrator will make the decision if school should be closed or delayed.
- q) **Absences:**
 - i) If a child stays home because of illness, the office will be informed by a phone call or a note. Please try to call by 7:30 a.m.
 - ii) If parents plan an extra vacation day or two before or after school vacation, they will inform the school and contact the teacher involved about missed work, since they often finish a unit or give a test just prior to vacations, and they are not required to prepare assignments or worksheets in advance.
- r) **Reports to Parents:**
 - i) A Wednesday Memo is sent home to announce weekly events. Most teachers send home a weekly note for their students' parents
 - ii) Report Cards are sent home on the third day after the marking period ends.
 - iii) Parent – Teacher conferences are held November and February. Ordinarily they are 15 minute conferences scheduled from 3:15 – 9:00 PM.
 - iv) A Writers' Journal is published two times each school year. It contains work done by the students. It will also contain reports by the board, administrator, committees, Discovery Center, and Ladies School Circle.
 - v) A school yearbook is available for purchase near the end of the school year.
- s) **Meetings**
 - i) School Board – Tuesday after the second Sunday of every month (contact the board secretary to confirm before attending.)
 - ii) Ladies Circle – meets in September, January, and April. This society works to bring about a closer relationship between home and school, that the parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the children according to the truth that the school, church, and home should cooperate in preparing our covenant children to manifest the glory of our sovereign God.
 - iii) Annual School Society – June
- t) **School Use By Parents:** The school building is a gift from our Heavenly Father. We expect all who enter the building to use it and everything in the school with respect. Please follow the rules below in order that we all may use the building in an orderly manner and that it will be ready the next day for student instruction:
 - i) **After hour use:** If parents are at school after school hours with their children, they are expected to directly supervise those children. Children are not allowed to play in classrooms unless given specific permission by that classroom teacher. Parents are expected to leave school securely locked up and anything that was taken out should be put away.

- ii) **Copies:** If parents use the copy machine or other materials from school, school should be reimbursed. An envelope for money can be found in the drawer across from the copy machine. Please leave an appropriate amount of money and reimburse for copies at a rate of 2 cents per copy.
- iii) **Projector/Overhead/T.V/etc...** If you would like to use the projector, overhead, T.V., or any other items at school or take them out of school, please contact the administrator in advance.

3) **Discovery Center**

The Discovery Room is available to help the teachers meet some of the special needs of our children. Our Discovery Room is a branch of Elim Christian Services, a special education organization located in Palos Heights, Illinois, that works with schools throughout the United States. Our Discovery Room teacher works with the teachers and Elim's Discovery Network Services program to help students get the opportunities needed to achieve their highest God-given potential. Testing and special instruction is given under the supervision of Elim. If you feel that your child needs some one on one instruction or special help, please contact your child's teacher or the principal.

4) Entrance and Exit Procedure/Dismissal Policies

- a) **Recess Policy** on cold and rainy days: It will be up to the discretion of the teacher to determine when the students should go out or stay in. If parents wish that a child stay in, please send a note to the teacher. If the wind chill is colder than -20 , the children will not be allowed out.
- b) **Tornado Policy**
 - i) In case of a tornado warning, the students will remain at school where they will be given the best protection we have available.
 - (1) Kindergarten assume the safety position in the teacher's bathroom.
 - (2) Lower Room assumes the safety position in the girl's bathroom.
 - (3) Upper Room assumes the safety position in the boy's bathroom.
 - (4) Middle Room assumes the safety position in the science lab.
 - (5) The safety position is kneeling down facing the wall with the head down and the hands covering the back of the head.
 - ii) In case of a tornado watch, the staff will monitor the situation.
 - iii) In the event of a warning, the board encourages parents not to try to pick up their children. If you do desire to have your children picked up by another family member, a phone call must be made to school to inform staff about who will be picking your child up. Students will not be released to family members other than parents unless a phone call is first made to school to ensure that the parents know where their children are under the circumstances.
- c) **Student Dismissal during the school day**
 - i) Students will not be dismissed by teachers from school during the school day to walk home or to appointments.
 - ii) Parents who need to get their children to appointments need to have their child picked up at school.
- d) **Dismissal Procedure at the end of the school day**
 - i) Students who are waiting for a car ride home must stay off the blacktop area of the parking lot and not play with any balls near the parking lot.
- e) **Off limits areas:** The supply room, mechanical room, and office are off limits to students. The only exception is to be there with permission of or in the presence of a teacher.

5) Student Behavior and Guidelines

Goal: To show ourselves as servants of God and reflectors of Christ in our behavior at school and in doing so, praise and glorify God.

General Rules for Behavior:

1. Respect for God's Word.
2. Respect the instructors of this school.
3. Respect the other students of this school.
4. Respect ourselves.

(To respect means "to hold in high or special regard." "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Philip. 2:3)

Room Guidelines:

1. Do nothing to interfere with the teacher's calling to instruct.
2. Do nothing to interfere with the other students use of class time as an opportunity to perform well in school

Room Particulars:

1. Be at full attention while being instructed.
2. Avoid causing any distraction to teacher, self, and other students.
3. Keep your desk and work area clean and neat.
4. Keep floor clean around your desk.
5. Practice manners and a polite manner.
6. Show proper respect to teachers and other students.
7. Go out of your way to help substitute teachers.
8. Be discreet at all times.

Hall and Playground Guidelines:

1. Do all things so that you are a positive influence on other students and the teachers.
2. Do all things so that disruptions and conflicts are avoided.
3. Do all things so the safety of others is ensured.

Hall and Playground Particulars:

1. Walk in the hall.
2. Do not loiter in the hall or in the ball room.
3. Use bathrooms for their intended use.
4. Avoid excessive noise in the hall.
5. Eat snacks at your desk or outside, not in the hall.
6. Don't bounce or throw balls in hall.
7. Do all in your power to make the game in which you are involved work well.
8. Use language that is pleasing to your Heavenly Father.
9. Use discretion

The following list of rules is by no means an exhaustive list. The following list is simply one that might not be covered in the preceding guidelines for student behavior.

1. Students must stay on school property after arriving until school is dismissed.
2. Permission must be obtained from the teacher to leave school property.
3. Students must wear boots or have extra shoes for outdoors.
4. No one is allowed on the school roof without permission.

Playground Rules:

1. Only swing straight on swings, not side to side.
2. Do not jump off swing while swinging.
3. Only one person on a swing at a time.
4. No standing on the merry-go-round
5. Do not go in the middle of the merry-go-round.
6. Do not play to the area north of the school building. The church parking lot may be used only when a teacher gives permission.
7. No baseballs are to be used on the playground.
8. No tackle football, throwing each other down, or other bodily contact games are permitted on school grounds.
9. All Bicycles must be properly parked in the bike racks. Bicycles brought to school should not be ridden during the school day.
10. Snowballing may only be done with consenting parties and in a designated snowball area. Each teacher will determine when conditions are right for snowballing and inform the students when snowballing is permitted. A teacher must be present to supervise snowballing.
11. King on the mountain is not allowed.
12. Students should not play in or around the pine trees south of school unless special permission is obtained by a teacher.
13. Soccer, basketball, softball, and other standard games must be played by the rules.
14. All playground equipment that has been taken out for recess must be brought back in.
15. When all students are restricted to the parking lot, an all school game is encouraged at the discretion of the supervising teacher.

6) Dress Code

Dress Code: “The clothes children wear to school must reflect the Christian values of decency and moderation. Although parents are primarily responsible for the dress of their individual children, the school reserves the right to determine dress standards in the school and at school functions. To that end, we require neat, modest, and appropriate attire suitable to an academic setting. Clothing that is distracting, attention getting, or which promotes themes in conflict with our Christian values may not be worn. The Administrator (principal) and staff will determine what is acceptable attire and set the standard for the school.” (Policy Handbook, p. 22) Teachers are expected to report dress code violations to the principal and they will counsel the student and inform the parents.

- i) **Shorts** following the “Finger Tip” rule are allowed. This means that when your child is standing up straight with his hands at his sides, the shorts must be long enough that they extend beyond the fingertips.
- ii) **Waistline.** Pants and shorts must be worn around the natural waist. Undergarments must not be seen.
- iii) **Form fitting.** No form fitting dresses, shirts, pants, shorts or skirts are allowed.
- iv) **Tops.** Shirts, tops, sweaters or blouses may not be revealing (i.e. exposed skin of the midriff, low-cut, see-through, form fitting, loose-sleeved or loose fitting as to expose chest or undergarment). Shirts should cover the shoulders, not expose them.
 - (1) **Specific for girls:** No sundresses, tank tops, or sundress style tops (open back or spaghetti straps). A tank top can act as a layer; they can’t be worn on their own.
- v) **Skirts and dresses:** Skirts and dresses must be knee length. Kindergarten through lower room girls are asked to wear shorts under their dresses in order to play on the playground equipment.
- vi) **Quality of clothing.** Sloppy, baggy, torn, or unkempt clothing is not allowed.
- vii) **Messages on clothing:** Clothing advertising alcohol, tobacco, music groups, radio stations, new age symbols, etc. is prohibited. Any words or pictures that hinder a positive Christian witness is unacceptable.
- viii) **Footwear:** Safe footwear must be worn at all times while on school property.
 - (1) Students must have separate indoor and outdoor footwear.
 - (2) Outdoor footwear must be shoes that cover the toes and enable students to participate in P.E. and other outdoor activities. (they can run and the shoe won’t come off.)
 - (3) Crocs and shoes without backs are not proper outdoor footwear but are allowed as indoor footwear.
 - (4) Flip-flops and sandals are not appropriate for school.
 - (5) Shoes with laces must be tied.
 - (6) Students should wear socks at all times.

- ix) **Accessories:** Hats, caps, bandanas, or sunglasses may not be worn in the classrooms or in church.
- x) **Hair color:** No unnatural hair color will be allowed (except on specific fun days).
- xi) **Chapel clothing:** Chapel attire should show the proper respect. Please save your best school clothes for these occasions.
- xii) **Inappropriate Clothing:** When clothing does not follow the rules, the student will be asked to change into or cover themselves with appropriate clothing from the supply of extra clothes kept at school. Parents may also be called to bring appropriate clothing for the child.

7) Student Technology Use

- a) **Cell Phone** – students who bring cell phones to school must leave them in their backpack during the school day. Students may not keep cell phones with them in the classroom or out on the playground during the school day. Students are required to behave properly as they would in the classroom. Students who need to check their cell phone for a message should inform their teacher of the need to do so. Misuse of the cell phone will result in the cell phone being confiscated for the day and returned to the student at the end of the day. Cell phones cannot be used for playing games or internet use at any time while at school.
- b) **All other technology** – MP3 players, iPods, and any other handheld devices are not allowed to be used while at school. Students who have these devices should leave them in their backpacks at all times.

8) Library Guidelines

- a) Students are required to behave properly as they would in the classroom
- b) All books may be checked out for a two-week period. Students may check out books only under their name.
- c) Books may be returned to the library cart at any time.
- d) The librarian or teacher will help check out all books. The person checking out the book is responsible for returning the book.
- e) If books are overdue for a month or are missing, the parents will be notified of missing books.
- f) If a student has a book that is more than two weeks overdue, no more books may be checked out by that student until the book or books are returned.
- g) Students are required to pay for any books that are lost or damaged beyond what is considered normal wear. Books are to be replaced with the same book or another of equal value.
- h) Students need to pay their fines to receive their final report cards.

9) Discipline Policy

All parents who enroll their children in this school shall express written agreement at the time of registration with the following policy regarding discipline:

A. The teachers bear God-given authority over the students and are to be honored by the students with all respect and obedience, according to the Fifth Commandment of God's law (Exodus 20:13; Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 39).

1. Although we recognize parents as the God-appointed authority in the lives of their children, the teachers are the extensions of that authority. Parents are expected to uphold the authority of the teachers in the exercise of biblical Christian discipline.
2. In view of this God-established relationship, the teacher will inform the parents, if serious problems arise, and explain present and potential measures of discipline.

B. The Exercise of Discipline:

1. Our children have depraved natures that occasion sin (Psalm 51:5). Therefore discipline is necessary as a means of correction and instruction.
2. The exercise of discipline by Christians is done out of the principle of love, with the purpose of showing the seriousness of sin before the Holy God, and seeking the repentance and proper behavior and attitude of the sinner.
3. The degree of the corrective measure should correspond with the degree of the offense, with the first measure being that of reproof or admonition.
4. As Scripture requires, the teacher is authorized to spank a child when warranted. (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 29:15). If such should become necessary, another teacher will be called in to witness the discipline and, if possible, the parents will be notified before the child is spanked. This spanking will take place by means of a stick or paddle administered to the backside of the student, and will be accompanied by counseling and instruction according to biblical principles.

C. Parents dissatisfied with any act of discipline shall follow this procedure:

1. Contact the teacher or teachers involved, preferably making such contact in person.
2. If satisfaction is not attained, contact the principal, again preferably in person.

3. If an understanding of the situation and satisfaction is not obtained, contact the School Board.
 4. Under no circumstances should such cases be discussed with persons other than the parties involved.
- D. The School Board reserves the right to refuse admission to, or to suspend for a period of time, or to expel from school any student whose conduct or influence fails to conform with the biblical principles of the school, or its rules and regulations.
- E. Any damage to school property, whether intentional or through carelessness (such as broken windows, plumbing fixtures, or damaged desks, books, etc) shall be repaired or replaced at the expense of the student or parents.

Due Process and Proper Parental Appeal

- 1) If a student has a disagreement with a punishment or policy of a teacher, he is to take the grievance to his parent.
- 2) The parent is to contact the teacher to try to work out the problem.
- 3) If satisfaction is not reached, the parent is to inform the teacher that he will contact the administrator.
- 4) Contact the administrator, preferably in person. If satisfaction still cannot be attained, the parent is to inform the administrator that he will contact the board president to set up an appointment with the board.
- 5) The teacher will be contacted by the board and allowed to appear before the board on the matter.
- 6) The decision of the board is to be final on the matter.

Sources:

- Adams, Teacher Handbook
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